

Message Text

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STADIS//////////
FOR NEA ASS. SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR
REF: STATE 24924

1. THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO GIVE ME THE BACKGROUND WHICH MAKES IT NECESSARY TO CONSIDER REPROGRAMMING POSITIONS IN NEA. I CONFESS TO A CERTAIN FEELING OF CONCERN ABOUT THE

CHANCERY STAFF, SINCE WE HAVE TRIED TO CONDUCT OUR WORK HERE OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS WITH FULL STAFFING FOR ONLY ONE, REPEAT ONE, OF THOSE 12 MONTHS. DURING THE SUMMER VACATION/ TRANSFER SEASON, AND WITH THE HIGH INCIDENCE OF DISABLING ILLNESS WE SEEM TO HAVE HERE, WE DO HAVE PERIODS WHEN MEETING ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIAL LEVIES FROM THE DEPARTMENT BECOMES RATHER DIFFICULT. I WILL BE PARTICULARLY WORRIED WHEN WE HAVE MORE HIGH-LEVEL VISITS AND OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS AND TRY TO COPE WITH THEM WITH A REDUCED STAFF. ALSO THE BASIC CONTROL BY STATE OF OTHER MISSION ELEMENTS IS ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY ANY EROSION IN OUR STATE STAFF.

2. DIRECTOR GENERAL DAVIS ENJOINED US TO AVOID (WHEN REORGANIZATION OR REDUCTION MIGHT BECOME NECESSARY) THE TEMPTATION OF ELIMINATING JUNIOR OR SUPPORT POSITIONS TO PERSERVE THE MORE SENIOR OFFICERS. THIS, IT SEEMS TO ME, IS SOUND ADVICE AND I DON'T WANT TO MAKE PERSONNEL DECISIONS HERE WHICH WILL DEPRIVE YOUNGER OFFICERS OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO GATHER VALUABLE EXPERIENCE NOR DO I WANT TO HAVE A CHIEF/ INDIAN SITUATION IN WHICH I HAVE TOO MANY SENIOR OFFICERS.

3. WITH THE ABOVE AS BACKGROUND, WE HAVE REVIEWED THE
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POSITION REDUCTIONS MENTIONED IN REFTEL AND I HAVE THE

FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

A) MEDICAL OFFICER POSITION AT KABUL HOSPITAL: WE ARE ABLE TO RELEASE THIS POSITION,

B) GENERAL SERVICES POSITION: I DO NOT FEEL THAT IS IS POSSIBLE TO ELIMINATE AN AMERICAN POSITION IN GENERAL SERVICES. AS S/IG POINTED OUT THIS SUMMER IN OUR INSPECTION, THE SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES IN KABUL IN GENERAL SERVICES OPERATIONS WERE DUE PRINCIPALLY TO INADEQUATE AMERICAN STAFFING AND INADEQUACIES OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES.

WE ARE JUST COMING TO THE POINT AFTER SIX MONTHS OF HARD WORK WHERE WE CAN BEGIN COPING WITH GENERAL SERVICES PROBLEMS WHICH VERGED UPON THE SCANDALOUS. WE CANNOT HOLD THE GROUND WE HAVE WON WITHOUT HAVING AN ADEQUATE AMERICAN STAFF TO SUPERVISE THE LOCAL STAFF. THIS IS A FACT OF LIFE HERE WHICH HAS BEEN CONFIRMED ALSO BY EXPERIENCE IN THE AID MISSION. IN SHORT, ANY REDUCTION IN OUR AMERICAN GENERAL SERVICES STAFF WOULD RISK FUTURE SCANDALS, AND I THEREFORE THINK IT WOULD BE A GRAVE MISTAKE TO CUT BACK THIS AREA OF THE EMBASSY.

C) WITH RESPECT TO THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL POSITION, LET ME JUST MAKE TWO GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

FIRST, THE EXTENSION OF SIZEABLE CREDITS TO AFGHANISTAN FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, ESPECIALLY FROM OIL-PRODUCING STATES, HAS CREATED OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMERICAN EXPORTS. WE ARE ALREADY WITNESSING A SURGE IN INQUIRIES FROM U.S. FIRMS, INCLUDING SUCH LARGE OUTFITS AS BECHTEL, BOEING AND HAWAIIAN AGRONOMICS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT PRIORITY STATE AND COMMERCE ATTACH THESE DAYS TO EXPORT PROMOTION IN A COUNTRY LIKE AFGHANISTAN, BUT I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT YOUR STAFF CONSIDER THE COMMERCIAL IMPLICATIONS BEFORE DECIDING TO CUT BACK ON THIS AREA OF OUR OPERATIONS.

SECONDLY, ONE OF OUR ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION'S KEY FUNCTIONS IS LIAISON WITH GUR AID MISSION AND THE SUPPLYING OF INDEPENDENT ADVISE TO ME ON POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA. THE SIZE OF OUR AID MISSION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALREADY MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE, IS GOING TO GROW AS A RESULT OF THE NEW PROGRAMS IN THE HELMAND VALLEY NOW BEING DEVELOPED, AND THE LIAISON JOB WILL BE MORE COMPLICATED AND TIME-CON-
SUMING BECAUSE TRAVEL TO THE HELMAND ZILL BE REQUIRED.

IF, DESPITE THESE CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH I THINK ARGUE AGAINST REDUCING OUR ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL STAFF, IT BACOMES NECESSARY TO DO SO, I WOULD THEN RECOMMEND ELIMINATION OF THE

POSITION OF ECONOMIC COUNSELOR AND CREATION OF A POLITICAL/ECONOMIC COUNSELOR WITH BROAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, POLITICAL MATTERS, AND THE ALL-IMPORTANT LIAISON WITH AID/ THE RESULT WOULD BE A POLITICAL/ECONOMIC SECTION HEADED BY A COUNSELOR WITH THREE MIDDLE-GRADE AND JUNIOR OFFICERS (CLASSES 4,5, AND 6). SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WILL REQUIRE A CLASS 4 ECONOMIC OFFICER WITH THE TECHNICAL SKILLS TO HANDLE THE SPECIAL SIDE OF ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL WORK. STRONG LANGUAGE ABILITY IS ALSO A NECESSITY.

4. WITH REGARD TO PARAGRAPH 9 OF REFTEL, A COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES AVAILABLE TO KABUL AS COMPARED, FOR EXAMPLE, TO SOME OF OUR NEIGHBORING POSTS WILL MAKE IT CLEAR, I THINK, THAT WE ARE VERY SHORT ON LOCAL POSITIONS. I HOPE IT WON'T BE NECESSARY TO HIT US IN THAT AREA. THE S/IG INSPECTION, INCIDENTALLY, SEEMED TO MAKE IT CLEAR KABUL NEEDS ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITIONS.

6. I HOPE THAT OUR FLEXIBILITY HERE ON TWO AMERICAN POSITIONS WILL BE HELPFUL. I HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT TWO POSITIONS ARE THE MAXIMUM THAT SHOULD WISELY BE REPROGRAMMED, AND WOUL STRONGLY PREFER ONLY ONE. I WOULD BE GLAD TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER FURTHER IN THIS CHANNEL IF THAT WOULD SEEM USEFUL.

7. REGARDS.
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